Alameda County

GENERAL ASSISTANCE FORUM

REPORT and RECOMMENDATIONS

December 1995

Public welfare

Prepared by:
General Assistance Forum
Alameda County Social Services Agency

Alameda County

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the leadership of Supervisor Gail Steele, a General Assistance Task Force met from November 1993 through February 1995 to identify strategies to restructure the General Assistance (GA) program. As a result, a number of successful program strategies were recommended and implemented. Despite those efforts, GA program costs remain a critical factor in Alameda County's financial crisis. For Fiscal 1995/96, a significant GA grant reduction and other GA cost reduction strategies were approved by the Board of Supervisors.

The General Assistance Forum was convened in September 1995 to renew and expand the community-based process for exploring alternatives to the planned GA cost reduction strategies. Under the direction of Supervisor Gail Steele, Supervisor Mary King and Social Services Agency Director Dr. Rodger Lum, the Forum included community leaders, representatives of community based and faith based organizations, City of Oakland staff, legal advocates, academicians, employer representatives, Social Services Agency staff, and staff from other County Departments. The Forum meetings were facilitated by the Center for the Common Good.

The Forum sought to develop a new vision and strategies for shaping the future of General Assistance within the context of diminishing resources, increased service demands and societal trends. Following initial discussions, the focus of the group quickly expanded to encompass general welfare reform issues. Work Groups explored opportunities for change within Alameda County Government, within the Alameda County Community, outside Alameda County, with the Business Community, and within a New Paradigm. **The Forum developed short and long term recommendations based on the guiding principles of shared responsibility, client empowerment and community partnerships.**

For the short term, *the General Assistance Forum recommends that the Board of Supervisors **adopt a County-wide strategy for supporting and financing the General Assistance** program and direct the County Administrator to work with the Budget Technical Workgroup and Labor to develop and implement this strategy.* Note: The County Administrator's representative to the Forum dissents with this short term recommendation.

For the long term, *the General Assistance Forum recommends that the Board of Supervisors:*
*a) **shift focus from General Assistance short-term budget strategies to a comprehensive welfare system.***
*b) **adopt a long term strategy for a comprehensive integrated service delivery model, not limited to General Assistance**, which stresses shared responsibility, client empowerment and self-sufficiency, and accountability based upon performance*
*c) **direct the Social Services Agency to establish a Design Team comprised of key stakeholders to design a new welfare model.***
Note: A minority of the Forum members wished to record their concern that any discussion of a comprehensive welfare system not be misinterpreted to mean elimination of legal guarantees which meet basic subsistence needs of clients. Also, it therefore wishes to affirm the legal commitment to provide for such needs.

The Forum recognizes the magnitude of the changes necessary to accomplish these recommendations, and members pledge their participation in helping shape this new comprehensive system.

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ISSUE STATEMENT

Rodger Lum, Ph.D., Director, Social Services Agency

Our nation is still searching for ways to end poverty, despite more than sixty years of organized efforts and lively debates. However, there is now widespread criticism or disillusionment with these approaches. Instead of cries to end poverty, there is a strong tide of argument to end welfare as we know it.
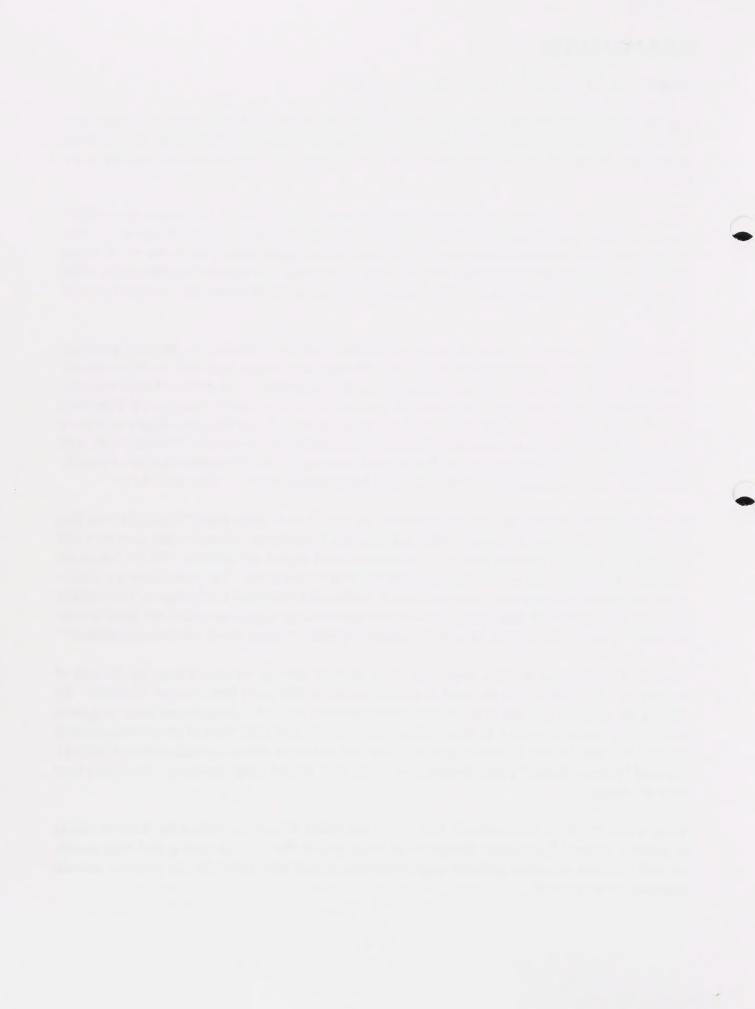
The current conservative ideology, building momentum since the mid-1970s, is based on the position that taxpayers are tired of supporting programs that are unable to move people out of poverty. This ideology also builds on the assumption that reducing or eliminating welfare payments will alter the behaviors of poor people and motivate them to work. Combined with macroeconomic trends, there is little question that the welfare system must undergo radical transformation if the poor are to be helped.

Current welfare reform proposals all feature less funding, but with increased flexibility in spending. These conditions will rapidly move local government programs toward capitated, outcomes-based, collaborative programs that will likely model managed care approaches in the health care industry. This approach requires State and county welfare agencies to become either the purchasers of services from provider networks or the providers of choice to customers. Either way, the system must have built-in financial incentives to encourage effective and efficient business practices. It would work well in a single welfare system that integrates funding and services for the full continuum of poor people, from single adults on General Assistance/General Relief to families with children on AFDC.

Before we adopt a solution too quickly, however, we should try to understand the social forces that shape current approaches to social problem solving, how these forces will evolve and how they will ultimately shape future problem solving. For instance, what impact will dramatic shifts in the ethnic make-up of the State have on social policies over the next twenty years? To what extent are attacks on affirmative action programs, immigrant rights, and welfare programs a reflection of national and statewide discomfort with these trends? How does "three strikes" legislation reflect the public's wish to isolate or protect itself from "aberrant" elements of society, which could also include the poor?

To counter these trends and their impact on social problem solving, we should focus on the kind of society we want. Where do we want to be twenty-five or fifty years from now as a nation? By framing this question, we have to be aware of how short-term, quick fix solutions may have long-term effects (e.g., denying welfare to teen mothers may create a new generation of poor, malnourished children who may lack the necessary skills to adapt well to a more technologically-oriented society). We need "futures-oriented" policy changes, not categorical, limited range solutions. We need a long view of change.

Welfare reform efforts will ultimately fail--unless this nation focuses on eradicating the root causes of poverty. Without fundamental changes in our social policies that exclude dealing with root causes, we will continue to pursue palliative approaches that appear appropriate for the moment, but will ultimately miss the mark.

PROCESS AND DISCUSSION

The General Assistance Forum was facilitated by the Center for the Common Good. The process began with individual pre-interviews with each participant, conducted by Martin Paley and Associates. Forum participants are listed in Attachment I. The first session included a five member panel discussion which addressed the question of rights and responsibilities of the individual, the community and government. Five Work Groups were formed to focus on specific approaches to program reform. During the process, two of the Work Groups combined. The Forum met four times: September 15 and 18; October 27; and, December 15, 1995. Work Groups met as needed. The following is a brief summary of the Work Group discussions.

The **New Paradigm** group emphasized empowerment for clients. The group assumed that GA would have existing funding or less, and that their model would be built on linkages with business. Several alternative program elements were considered, a significant one being a vocational rehabilitation model including a training center concept as described in Attachment II.

The **Business Community** group recommended that business be invited to consult with the County (pro bono, if possible) on developing a business strategy, how to get the corporate community involved as advisors, getting corporate assistance for a marketing plan, assistance with fund development, and gaining business' commitment to employ clients. It was suggested that the Corporate Leaders Annual Symposium and CORO Fellows could be a resource. Other means of access to corporate CEOs should be sought. Corporations might be asked to take the GA budget and recommend a plan for services that would include their own involvement. The group discussed creating a Work Center for employment that would include training, business contracts, and employment placements. It would also include the training center concept as discussed by the New Paradigm group. The group recognized that for success, additional funds outside the County were needed, and they suggested that this could include Small Business Administration loans and partnerships with existing organizations.

The **County and Community Partnership** group looked at how to develop partnerships between business, community, and government organizations. The group noted that specific demographic and resource data was needed for planning, and that political support from cities and the County was essential. It was recognized that those who are currently on General Assistance need a variety of different services and fall into three target groups: those who can work, those who can't work, and those who are elderly (there can also be sub-groups of these three target groups). It was suggested that stakeholders for each target group be involved in planning for their group, and that funds be allocated and basic service criteria be established for each.

The **Outside Alameda County** group focused on Regional Planning, suggesting that potential for shared services, existing overlapping services, and "fixed" differences be explored. It was noted that there has been a tradition of not competing with the private sector labor market, but that there may be good reasons for re-assessing this. This group discussed a single welfare system to manage welfare reform and enable a regional approach to welfare programs.

After reviewing the Work Group findings, the Forum developed short and long term recommendations. Since Labor and client representatives were not involved in the Forum, the process, discussion and recommendations do not reflect their direct input.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Short term recommendation:

The General Assistance Forum recommends that the Board of Supervisors adopt a County-wide strategy for supporting and financing the General Assistance program, and direct the County Administrator to work with the Budget Technical Workgroup and Labor to develop and implement this strategy.

Discussion: The Forum finds that County government as a whole has a shared responsibility for General Assistance clientele. The Forum recognizes that the Social Services Agency is responsible for managing the General Assistance program. However, financing should be a County-wide shared responsibility.

Note: The County Administrator's representative to the Forum dissents with both the short term recommendation and discussion.
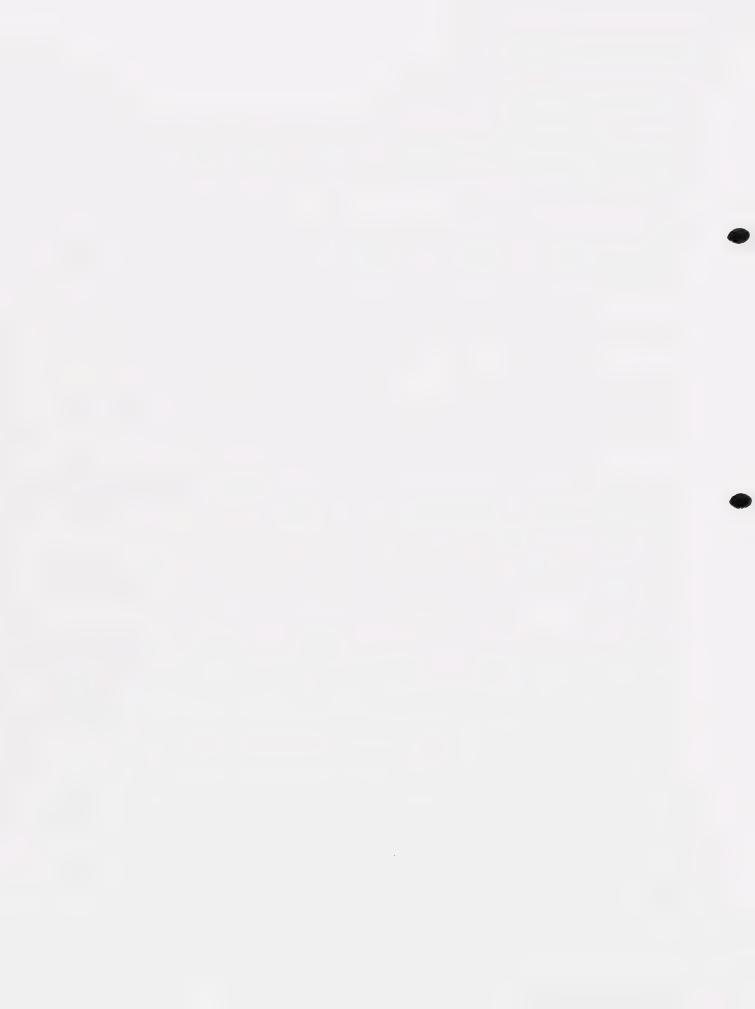
2. Long term recommendations:

a) The General Assistance Forum recommends that the Board of Supervisors shift focus from General Assistance short term budget strategies to a comprehensive welfare system.

b) The General Assistance Forum recommends that the Board of Supervisors adopt a long term strategy for a comprehensive integrated service delivery model, not limited to General Assistance, which stresses shared responsibility, client empowerment and self-sufficiency, and accountability based upon performance.

c) The General Assistance Forum recommends that the Board of Supervisors direct the Social Services Agency to establish a Design Team comprised of key stakeholders to design a new welfare model.
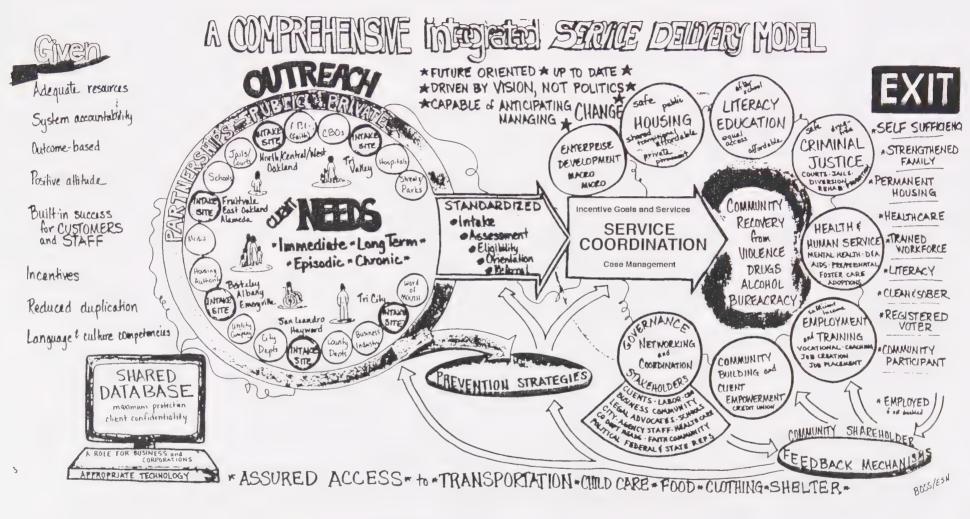
Discussion: The graphic on page 5 illustrates the recommended *comprehensive service delivery model*. The new model could include shared responsibility among stakeholders, client empowerment and community partnerships. It could eliminate categorical programs through waivers and changes in laws and regulations. It could share common resources, funding and information among service providers. It could foster community and economic development, and could focus on individual strengths and positive outcomes.

Inclusion of key stakeholders is a critical success factor. Stakeholders already identified include clients, labor, the business community, legal advocates, community based organizations, cities, Social Services Agency staff, County department heads, the faith community, schools, health care, political, Federal and State representatives.

Note: A minority of the Forum members wished to record their concern that any discussion of a comprehensive welfare system not be misinterpreted to mean elimination of legal guarantees which meet basic subsistence needs of clients. Also, it therefore wishes to affirm the legal commitment to provide for such needs.

A COMPREHENSIVE integrated SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

Given

Adequate resources

System accountability

Outcome-based

Positive attitude

Built-in success for CUSTOMERS and STAFF

Incentives

Reduced duplication

Language & culture competencies

OUTREACH

PARTNERSHIPS = PUBLIC & PRIVATE

★ FUTURE ORIENTED ★ UP TO DATE ★
★ DRIVEN BY VISION, NOT POLITICS ★
★ CAPABLE of ANTICIPATING & MANAGING ★ CHANGE ★

EXIT

- ★ SELF SUFFICIENCY
- ★ STRENGTHENED FAMILY
- ★ PERMANENT HOUSING
- ★ HEALTHCARE
- ★ TRAINED WORKFORCE
- ★ LITERACY
- ★ CLEAN & SOBER
- ★ REGISTERED VOTER
- ★ COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT
- ★ EMPLOYED & or disabled

CLIENT NEEDS
★ Immediate ★ Long Term ★
★ Episodic ★ Chronic ★

Intake sites: North Central/West Oakland, Tri Valley, Hospitals, CBOs, F.B.I. (faith), Jails/Courts, Schools, Fruitvale East Oakland Alameda, Meals, Housing Authority, Berkeley Albany Emeryville, Utility Company, City Depts, San Leandro Hayward, County Depts, Business Industry, Shreet/Parks, Word of Mouth, Tri City

STANDARDIZED
- Intake
- Assessment
- Eligibility
- Orientation
- Referral

SERVICE COORDINATION
Incentive Goals and Services
Case Management

COMMUNITY RECOVERY from VIOLENCE DRUGS ALCOHOL BUREAUCRACY

ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT MACRO MICRO

HOUSING safe public shared transitional affordable private permanent

LITERACY EDUCATION equal access affordable

CRIMINAL JUSTICE COURTS · JAILS · DIVERSION · REHAB

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICE MENTAL HEALTH · DSA AIDS · PRE/PERINATAL FOSTER CARE ADOPTIONS

EMPLOYMENT and TRAINING VOCATIONAL · COACHING JOB CREATION JOB PLACEMENT

GOVERNANCE NETWORKING and COORDINATION STAKEHOLDERS: CLIENTS · LABOR · OR BUSINESS COMMUNITY LEGAL ADVOCATES · SCHOOLS CITY · AGENCY STAFF · HEALTHCARE CO DEPT HEADS · FAITH COMMUNITY POLITICAL FEDERAL & STATE REPS

COMMUNITY BUILDING and CLIENT EMPOWERMENT CREDIT UNION

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

COMMUNITY SHAREHOLDER
FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

SHARED DATABASE
maximum protection
client confidentiality

A ROLE FOR BUSINESS and CORPORATIONS

APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY

★ ASSURED ACCESS ★ to ★ TRANSPORTATION ★ CHILD CARE ★ FOOD ★ CLOTHING ★ SHELTER ★
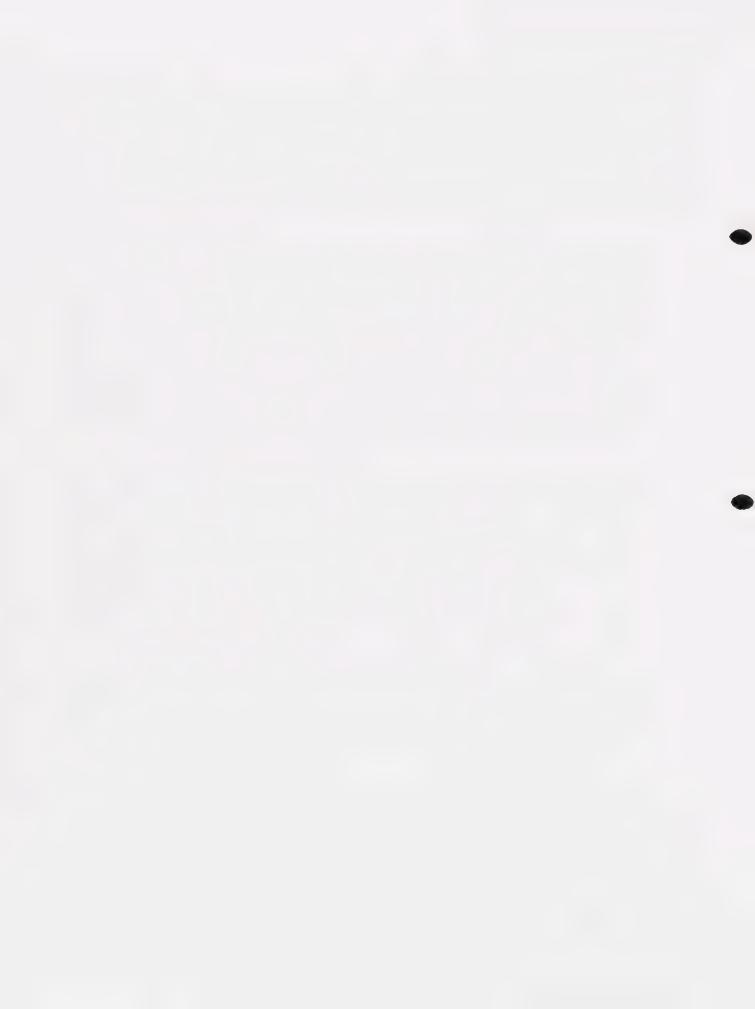
BOSS/ESN

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

During the Work Group discussions, a number of ideas surfaced which the Forum feels warrant further consideration by the recommended Design Team. Under the guiding principles of shared responsibility, client empowerment and community partnerships, these ideas rely on developing partnerships between business, community and government organizations in order to focus resources on the target population. Stakeholders should be involved in planning the use of resources, and information should be available to assess current services and assure funding of successful services. These and other ideas will need to be developed more fully by stakeholders and the Design Team. Among several creative ideas were:

o **Single Welfare System** - Develop and implement a single welfare system which would integrate General Assistance and categorical assistance programs (Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Medi-Cal, Food Stamps, employment and other programs) in a combined comprehensive system with blended local, State and Federal funding. The system would include a single client intake and assessment service, integrated Federal, State and local job training programs (Greater Avenues for Independence, Food Stamp Employment and Training, General Assistance Employment Services, Refugee Employment Services, Job Training Partnership Act) and a job creations component. Shared responsibility and coordination across other systems (health care, social services, education, criminal justice, and probation), as well as linkages with schools would be prominent features. The Single Welfare System is described in Attachment II.

o **Employment Strategies** - With the active involvement of the business community, develop and implement employment strategies based on successful models. The program would include Vocational Counseling and Assessment, a Work Center, Community Based Work Projects, Transitional Employment Programs, External Situational Assessments, Pre-Vocational Services, pre-Employment Services, a Job club, Supported Employment, Job Placement assistance, and Career Advancement Counseling. The Special Work Project described in Attachment III is a successful model that could accommodate General Assistance clients. An important issue for some Forum members was that participation should be voluntary.

o **Client Credit Union** - Develop a credit union for clients that would incorporate electronic benefits transfer, access to loans, credit counseling, and would provide access to additional resources for clients to enable client self-determination. Assistance from large corporations - like Microsoft - should be sought. As a business, this is also a job training opportunity. This idea is described in Attachment IV.

o **Military Base Re-Use** - Acquire the Oakland Army Base for Re-Use as a Regional or County Job Training/Shelter program which includes multi-service centers, housing, education, and linkages with other essential services. This would include building partnerships at the Federal, State and local levels, and rely on the principles of the Single Welfare System. Create a campus experience with intensive training and service opportunities would build a sense of community among the recipients. This project would include a focus on community economic development and job creation. An important issue for some Forum members was that participation should be voluntary. Refer to Attachment V for an expanded description.

General Assistance Forum

PARTICIPANTS

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
Kathy Archuleta	Assistant Agency Director	Social Services Agency
Ed Barnes	Staff Attorney	Berkeley Community Law Center
Steve Bischoff	Executive Director	Mental Health Association
Mary Ann Cabral	Principal Analyst	County Administrator's Office
Dr. Woody Carter	Director, Project Reclaim	Social Services Agency '
Boona Cheema	Executive Director	Berkeley Oakland Support Services
Dorothy Chen	Director, Alameda County Private Industry Council	Social Services Agency
Alona Clifton	Chief of Staff	Supervisor Carson's Office
Don Cote	Executive Director, Vocational Program	Health Care Services Agency
Fr. George Crespin	Pastor	St Joseph the Worker Church
Carl Doakes	Executive Director	Henry Robinson Multi Service Center
Dr. Neil Gilbert	School of Social Work	UC Berkeley
Dr. Sheryl Goldberg	Research Coordinator	UC Berkeley
John Hazen	Acting Director Juvenile Services	Probation Department
Barbara Humphries	Chair	Alliance of Drug & Alcohol Programs
Mary King	County Supervisor, District 4	Alameda County
Alice Lai-Bitker	Aide	Supervisor Chan's Office
Dr. Rodger Lum	Director	Social Services Agency
Carl Lynn	Employer	GAIN Advisory Council
J. W. Macklin	Pastor	Glad Tidings
Christopher Martinez	Health Policy Associate	Alameda Health Consortium
Chester McCall	Homeless Programs Supervisor	City of Oakland
Geoff Merideth	Interim Director	Emergency Services Network
Leslie Mikkelsen	Director of Nutrition Services	Alameda County Community Food Bank
Sandi Olsen	Supervisor Assistant	Supervisor Campbell's Office
Arnold Perkins	Director, New Public Health	Health Care Services Agency
Charles Plummer	Sheriff	Alameda County Sheriff's Department
Paul Reeves	Division Director	Social Services Agency
Susan Shelton	Housing Coordinator, Office of Neighborhood & Housing Development	City of Oakland
Mario Solis	Assistant Agency Director	Social Services Agency
Gail Steele	County Supervisor, District 2	Alameda County
Valerie Street	Homeless Coordinator	Social Services Agency
Marye Thomas, M.D.	Director, Behavioral Care Department	Health Care Services Agency
Sandy Turner	Chair	Criminal Justice Oversight Committee
Tiana Wertheim	Program Assistant	Urban Strategies Council

Guests

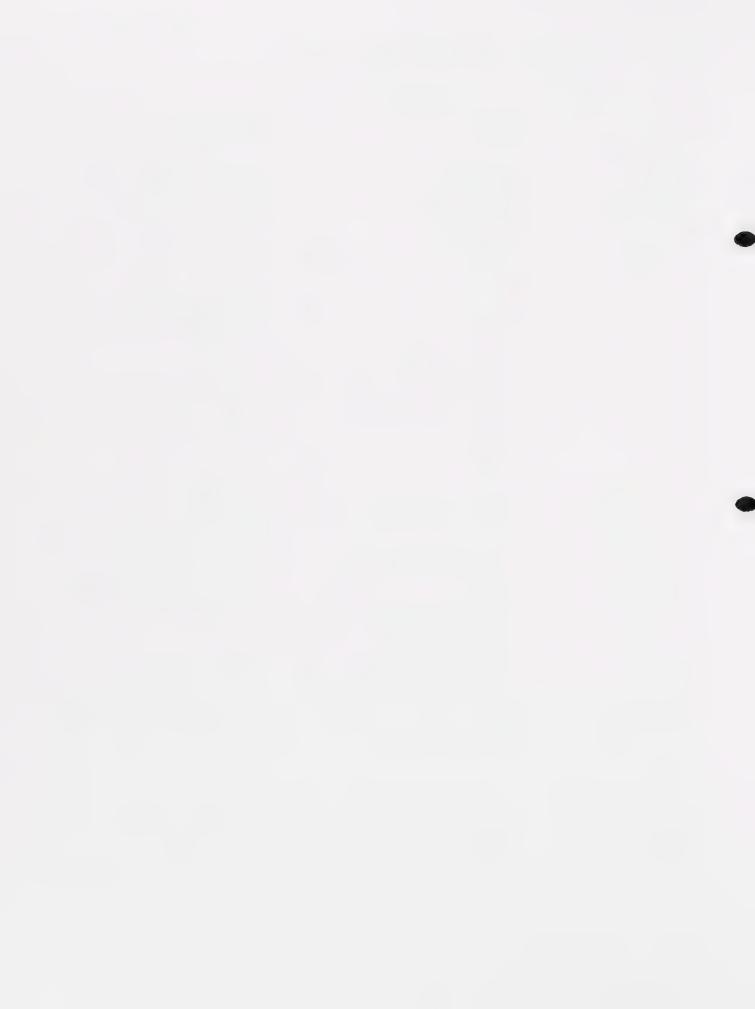|		
Fred Beal	Senior. Field Representative	SEIU Local 535
Barbara Brennan	Eligibility Technician II	Social Services Agency
Pertrina Coleman	Eligibility Technician III	Social Services Agency
Alvaree Swayne	Field Representative	SEIU Local 616
Joy Walton	Administrative Analyst	County Administrator's Office

General Assistance Forum

PARTICIPANTS
(Continued)

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Gary Sjoberg	Management Analyst	Social Services Agency
Mona Wright	Program Manager	Social Services Agency

Facilitation: Center for the Common Good

Martin Paley	Director
Nancy Lee	Community Involvement Coordinator
Gordon Firestein	Project Manager
Amy Graybeal	Graphic Recorder
Leslie Salmon	Graphic Recorder
Mary Brake	Graphic Recorder
Suzanne London	Graphic Recorder
Kristi Blagsvedt	Graphic Recorder Trainee

Single Welfare System

Presented by
Alameda County Social Services Agency
December 12, 1995

Problem Statement

What is the problem that The Single Welfare System will address?

Federal proposals to time-limit AFDC benefits and to impose job placement requirements necessitate the rapid development of effective, integrated programs to serve those individuals and families receiving welfare system support. It is only through a Single Welfare System that clients can effectively receive the benefits and support necessary to move from welfare into a process for achieving long-term self-sufficiency.

Core Concept

The core concept is to implement an integrated, not fragmented or discrete, welfare program that replaces Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and General Assistance (GA) programs. Planning and implementation must include: community economic development activities; client and community empowerment strategies; as well as partnerships among labor, business, education, government and community services organizations.

Cuts in welfare spending and pending changes in the status of entitlement programs (e.g., AFDC) require a radical reframing of welfare programs. Discrete, categorical approaches that treat women and children or unemployed parents separately and differently from single adults, childless couples or families who are ineligible for federal aid (AFDC and Medicaid/Medi-Cal) can no longer be maintained. An integrative and collaborative approach, that moves away from categorical problem solving and service delivery, and promotes "economies of scale" and a holistic view of recipient needs, must be developed and implemented. Such a new system must provide positive client outcomes focused on long-term self-sufficiency for individuals and families. Although reforms in the AFDC program are prominent in public policy and legislative debates, the General Relief/General Assistance program must be included in these discussions.

Reforming welfare must focus on creating healthy, self-sustaining communities. This will be accomplished by: developing the capacity of the local economy to sustain jobs and businesses; developing more extensive support systems for low income individuals and families; mobilizing a contingent of "change agents" and advocates to transform local communities; and, improving the delivery of human and community services. These principles are at the core of taking client and community responsibility to the maximum.

Doing business differently is essential. This is nowhere more important than at the client-agency interaction level. Traditional roles will be redefined as we move toward a radically new system and a new organizational culture. This new culture requires organized labor and management to work collaboratively to implement and support critical changes to the system and to organizations. Staff, labor and management must recognize that all are vested in creating a new system that maximizes positive outcomes for the clients served.
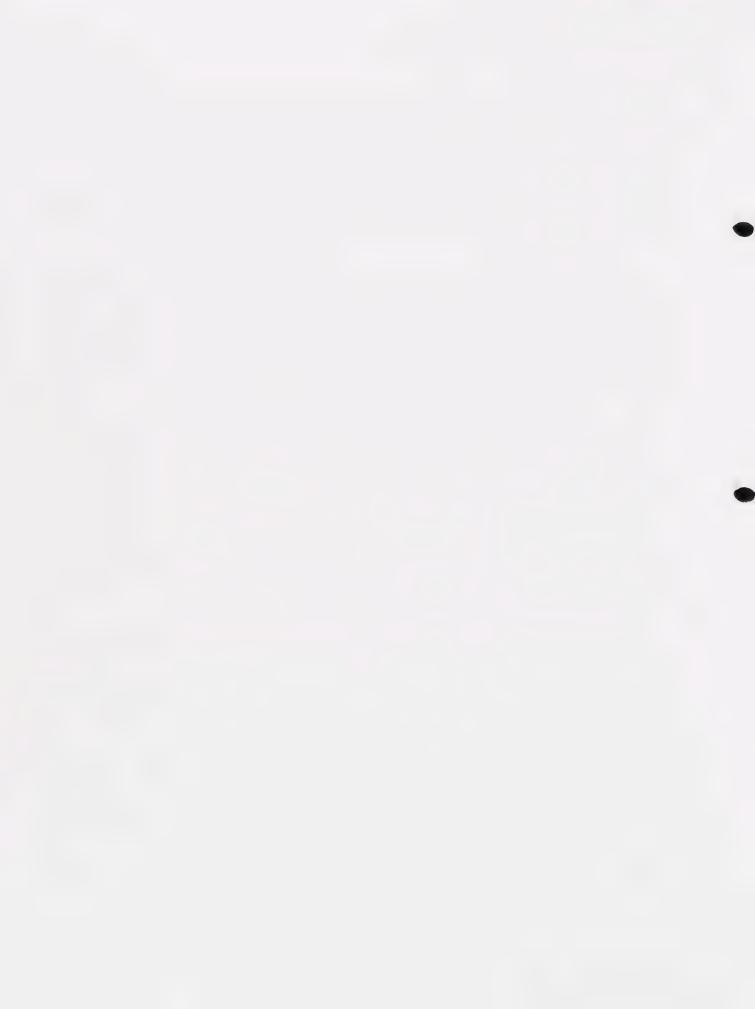
Key Elements

o   **Blended funding.** The removal of categorical and the restrictive use of welfare financing will allow for a more flexible and effective utilization of available financing. Pooling of AFDC and GA dollars can, and perhaps should, include funds from other agencies or departments that serve welfare recipients, for example, housing, health care, and criminal justice resources. The system should ask, "Given all available funds for helping the welfare recipient population, what is the most cost-effective use of these dollars to achieve positive outcomes?". This approach must also examine ways to maximize the leveraging of funds, from public and private resources, and to increase the return on investment.

The County will inventory the current funding of welfare programs, by public and private sources and across public and private entities. This inventory will include, but is not limited to, dollars in health, probation, criminal justice, and education that are used to serve and benefit welfare recipients both directly and indirectly. Including non-social service funds in the inventory/asset analysis will provide a global picture of all resources spent on the welfare population. It is logical to then ask whether there might not be better ways of spending these funds, through different approaches, to improve health, welfare and education outcomes.

o   **Community economic development.** A plan that promotes and supports community efforts to enhance infrastructure capacities and economic strength and vitality must be part of the strategy. Local businesses and non-profit operations must support the community in the development of employment and economic opportunities. The local community must also support the local businesses and nonprofit operations for the betterment of the local economy. Categorical problem solving, whereby welfare programs tend to exclude economic development strategies while community leaders often fail to include county welfare departments in planning, cannot continue if the economic development of the local community is to advance. Government programs and agencies must develop partnerships with cities, communities and neighborhoods to promote and ensure a high quality of service delivery.

Current directions in the employment and training community, regarding work force development and skills acquisition, are an integral part of the economic development discussion. The goal of the State of California's work force development effort is to have a strong economy and a globally competitive work force by the year 2000. This can only be accomplished through pro-active economic development partnerships, which include all local parties within the community.

o   **Integration of job training programs.** The decategorization of job training programs will encourage maximum flexibility and creativity in delivering performance-driven training and employment services. The coordination and integration of resources, services and capabilities from the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN), Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET), GA Employment Services (GAES), Refugee Employment Services, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) / Private Industry Council (PIC), and the California Employment Development Department (EDD) programs can significantly increase the opportunities available to the low-income and welfare populations to be served in the local communities.

In addition, the incorporation of "best practices", from effective job training programs across the United States, through the restructuring of local programs will enable clients to utilize the strategy most effective to meeting their needs and goals. Alternative employment strategies, such as Employment Maintenance Organizations (EMOs) managed by either public or private entities which use capitated, outcome-driven, and incentive-based approaches, must be evaluated and considered as options for local service delivery.

The Work force Development directions that include one-stop service systems, the "no wrong door" approach to services, specific performance standards and accountability criteria, customer choice, customer satisfaction, and the need for life-long learning, must also be evaluated and addressed in the employment strategies implemented for a new welfare system.

o   **Job creation.** A single welfare system and an integrated job training program must include an aggressive plan to create and sustain jobs in the local communities that works with employers. The new system must implement the "best practices", strategies and techniques from the most successful employment programs and job developers in order to most effectively move clients into employment. The plan must encourage employers to utilize all approaches to increasing job opportunities, such as job sharing, wage subsidies, paid vs. voluntary work, and/or on-the-job training. The plan must also advocate for Federal and State tax credits for employers who hire welfare recipients.

Strong linkages and partnerships between welfare systems, job training programs, labor organizations and the business community must be created and maintained. These partnerships will develop the win-win interactions that foster job creation and involve the local community in the plan to fill and sustain those jobs.

o   **Training clients in community organizing and empowerment skills.** County welfare departments must develop the system's capacity to teach clients community organizing and empowerment skills. These skills will enable clients to become "change agents" in their neighborhoods in the areas of community development, crime prevention, welfare rights advocacy, infrastructure capacity building and community leadership development. Clients can move from feelings of helplessness and hopelessness to a position of strength, connection, and empowerment. Natural partners for creating such empowerment opportunities are the Community Action Agencies (CAA) in Alameda County, which are the Associated Community Action Program (ACAP) and the CAAs in the City of Berkeley and the City of Oakland, as well as schools, youth development programs and community improvement activities sponsored by public, private, and religious organizations.

o   **Shared responsibility and coordination across systems.** There must be shared responsibility and coordination across systems (such as health care, social services, education, criminal justice, probation, children's services, etc.) in order to improve positive outcomes for the clients served. Service organizations must ask, "How can we work together to ensure better outcomes? How can discrete services see the client or the family as a whole?"

One-stop multi service centers are elements of a larger systems approach toward defining areas of

shared responsibility. Shared program and administrative responsibility should include shared deficit planning. Current categorical funding and mandates impose huge barriers to shared responsibility. In moving toward welfare block grants State and Federal governments must include incentives that promote shared responsibility and accountability across systems.
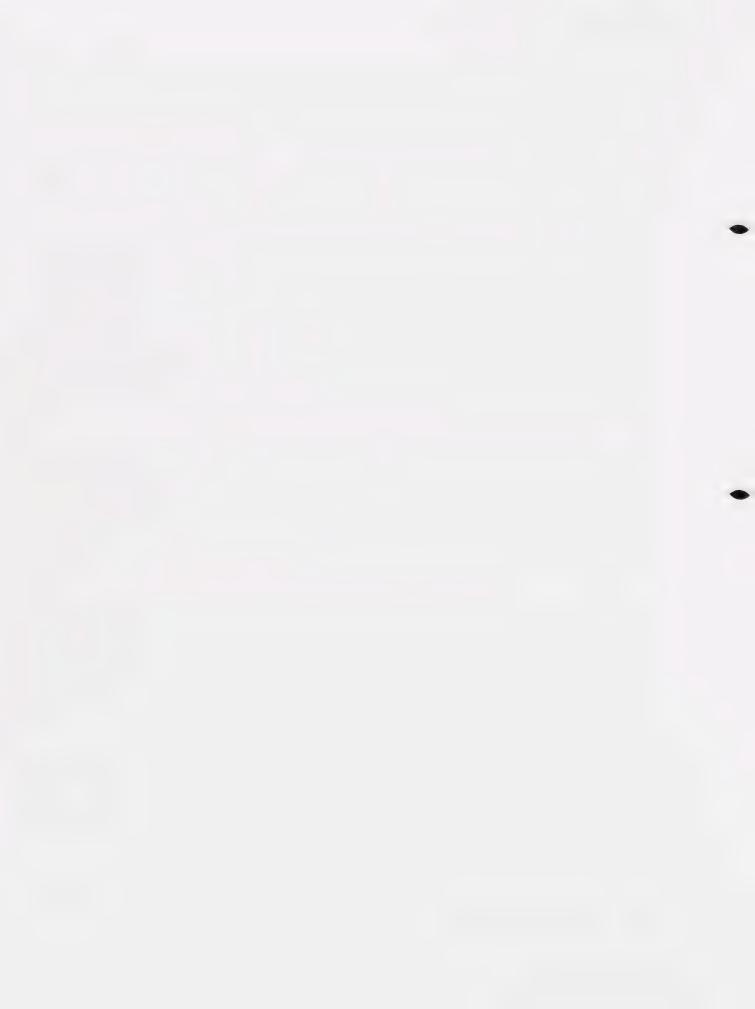
A critical component of block grants is the elimination of the entitlement concept. In the new environment, local communities will have the opportunity, and the responsibility, for determining who will be served. Inherent in this decision is the assumption that not everyone will be served.

o   **Outcome- or performance-based budgeting.** Government must hold all entities, including themselves, accountable for achieving positive results and outcomes. The continued financing of programs must be based on achieving specified positive results and/or outcomes. Government must negotiate and operationalize reasonable and responsible performance standards within and across systems. Community-based organizations, other non-profits and private-for-profit agencies that contract with the county will be responsible for meeting performance standards and achieving appropriate and specific outcomes. Government must build confidence with and in the community to ensure the effectiveness of outcome/performance-based budgeting. Efficiencies in the conduct of business and delineating the roles of government versus non-profit and private-for-profit services are part of this confidence building.

o   **Partnerships and linkages with schools.** County welfare departments must develop formal and extensive linkages with schools to identify children at risk of academic and social failure who may end up on welfare. These linkages would develop school and community-based interventions that: 1) focus on helping children remain in school, 2) improve coping skills, 3) develop pre-vocational skills; 4) discourage teen pregnancy, and, 5) share responsibilities for student outcomes. The School-to-work and school-based Healthy Start programs are two partnerships addressing the County welfare departments' prevention objectives.

o   **Single intake, assessment and case management system.** This system streamlines the application process, reduces duplicate and unnecessary paperwork, and improves client assessments. This is an essential "front-end" redesign that features the most effective assessment methods to evaluate client needs, strengths, aptitudes, interests, and job readiness, and that develops an individualized client learning and job training plan directed towards long-term self-sufficiency. Any assessment must include comprehensive evaluations of barriers to self-sufficiency (e.g., alcohol and drug use, mental illness, physical problems, low self-esteem, illiteracy, etc.).

A single case manager will have general responsibility for linking clients to the services necessary to overcome the identified barriers. The case manager will identify and monitor progress on the client's goals and objectives and will intervene with additional linkages when appropriate. Clients who are not employable will be referred for SSI eligibility and will continue to receive income maintenance and basic health and social services until reassessments determine otherwise.

o   **Child care services.** Parents who are enrolled in classes, participating in skills training programs, attending job workshops, working part-time or entering full-time employment need quality child care. The lack of child care cannot be a reason parents do not, or cannot, access education, training

or employment. Various proposals to render child care services optional at State discretion could seriously erode efforts to help parents out of poverty. Single mothers on welfare have consistently argued that they need more child care, not less. It will be necessary, therefore, for the new system to ensure the availability of, and access to, quality child care that will meet the needs of the parents served in the most effective and cost efficient way.

o **Integrated or shared management information systems.** A single welfare system must include an integrated data management information system that includes social services (combining economic benefits, employment, child welfare, family support services and aging and adult services) and related databases in the health care, education and criminal justice systems. The State and counties maintain discrete management information systems for health, welfare, education and justice systems with client confidentiality laws and categorical funding as factors that promote this fragmented approach to data management. An integrated system is essential for an effective case management and service delivery system and in order to implement a systems evaluation and accountability process.
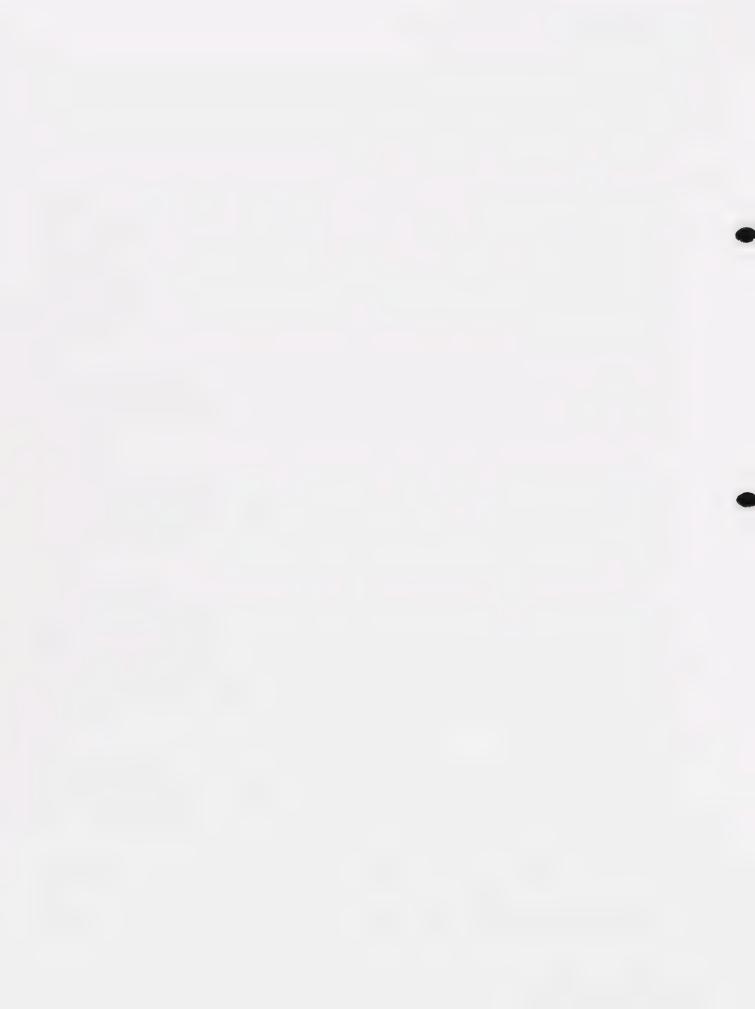
The implementation of an Electronic Benefits Transfer system is a potentially significant cost-savings operation to be linked to the management information system. Computer mapping of client residence and service sites will help coordinate resources that are geographically accessible to the client and identify neighborhoods in greatest need

o **Performance-based budget incentives.** The reinvestment of savings and revenues to support basic or new programs and/or the creation of a Credit Union can be incentives to empower the system to improve performance. Performance-based budget incentives will reward outstanding work, with cost savings and revenues generated reinvested into the program for enhancements or additions to services and/or to compensate workers for performance improvements.

Reinvestments in and/or contributions to a Credit Union geared towards low-income consumers would establish a fund to help clients with loans (e.g., for first and last month's rent, clothing, educational allowances, etc.). Clients can conduct routine banking, including utilization of the Electronic Benefits Transfer services, through the Credit Union. Current models and programs exist which can be approached for partnership agreements and expertise through technical assistance. The HUD Family Self-Sufficiency Program has funds to help clients when they move off of subsidized housing and Community Development Banks direct their banking services to the low-income population.

o **Regional approaches to welfare programs.** Certain welfare programs might lend themselves well to regional administration and/or the delivery of services (e.g., employment and training programs). Regional programs could also discourage client migration and "benefits shopping" across counties, especially if there is an integrated, linked management information system for the region.

Even if it is very difficult to administer welfare programs on a regional level, it is important that counties look at social problems from a regional perspective and collaborate wherever possible for the common good. Examples of regional approaches to welfare programs exist in the Bay Area. HUD has allocated $7 million to the nine Bay Area Counties to integrate services to the homeless.
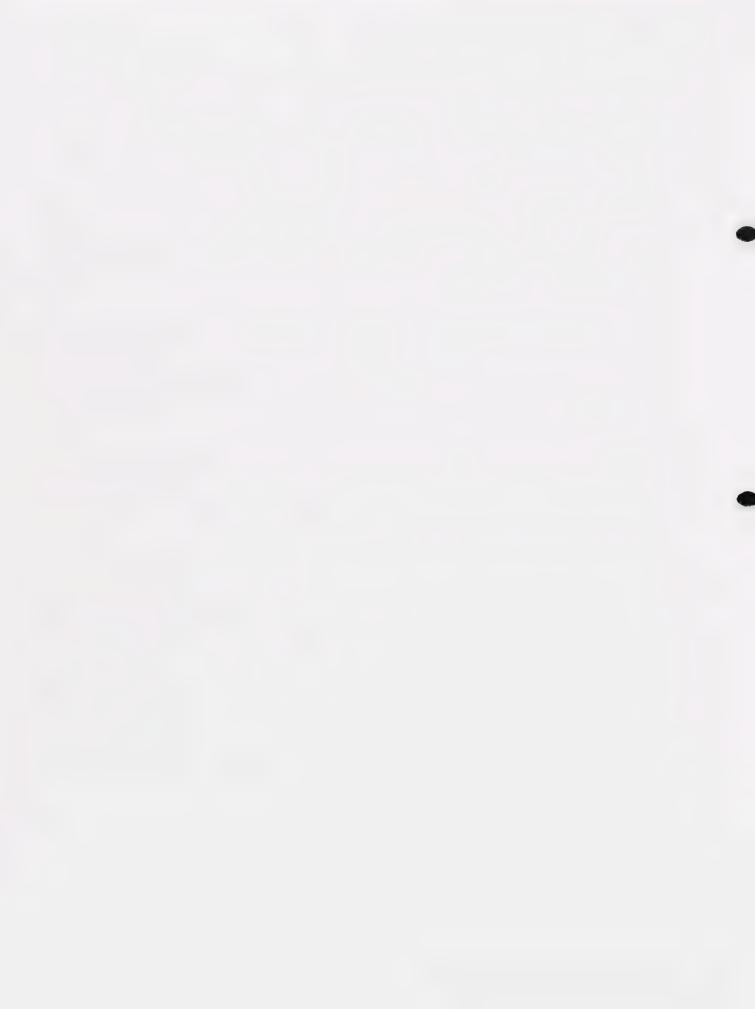
The planning for this allocation includes area wide employment services as well as electronically linked intake and case management activities. Although targeted for the homeless, this project should contribute to the infrastructure necessary to expand services to other populations. The Bay Area PICs have developed a shared case management system and an area-wide vendors list.

o **Staff training and professional development.** Workers will need new skills for blended, collaborative services. In many cases, traditional job functions will change and workers, at all levels, will need additional training and retraining. Management staff will need training in effective leadership in a block grant, devolved service environment. Staff development must include professional resource development, emphasis on functioning in an environment of change, contributing to a problem solving work group and methods to empower clients to address their own needs. While government will maintain the major responsibility for administering welfare programs, it must change the organizational climate to emphasize outstanding customer service, measurable client outcomes, and flexible, creative problem solving in order to meet the needs and demands of the client and the local community.

County staff will need to address the community's growing demand for greater involvement in program design and service delivery. Low income communities in particular will argue that government agencies must shift funding and responsibility to community organizations to more effectively meet the needs of the low income client. Government must acknowledge the role and the value of those community organizations to support the community-wide objectives of the new welfare system.

o **Transportation.** Clients need affordable transportation to access education, job training, support services, job interviews and employment opportunities. Advocacy for a universal public transportation pass for low-income families, which is applicable to all public transportation systems in the Bay Area, is an action needed to support affordable transportation.

o **Federal and State waivers.** Alameda County will need waivers to decategorize services and blend federal and state funding with local dollars. Alameda County must pursue parallel processes for the development of a single welfare system: 1) formulate recommendations for specific waivers and discuss these with State and Federal authorities, with the goal of shaping any subsequent regulations or requirements derived from welfare block grants, 2) evaluate proposed changes imposed by block grants and reframe the necessary waivers; and, 3) redesign aspects, processes and/or procedures of the current and evolving system to improve service delivery, regardless of the actions or results of the other processes. The first option is proactive and aggressive, and positions the County as an active participant in welfare reform, the second option is reactive, yet reflects the possibility that neither the State or Federal governments will consider any waiver requests until block grant proposals take shape. Any welfare reform bill that permits or encourages counties to restructure welfare programs outside traditional paradigms or constructs could be a vehicle for doing business differently.

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SPECIAL WORK PROJECT

The Alameda County Social Services Agency and the Alameda County Vocational Program have formed a special working relationship. Together the two programs are proposing the creation of a special work project which would serve those Alameda County citizens who are currently receiving General Assistance benefits. This new program will create a comprehensive vocational rehabilitation project which will provide vocational counseling, job skill training, special work projects, and job placement services for our GA population.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Intake, screening, eligibility determination, case management, and referral

The General Assistance/Food Stamp Employment & Training Program will identify, determine eligibility, screen, and refer to ACVP, those General Assistance clients who they determine appropriate for the special work project.

Vocational Counseling and Assessment

All GA clients referred to ACVP will be seen by a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor who will assess the vocational needs of the client and function as the clients' vocational rehabilitation counselor for the duration of their participation in the special work project.
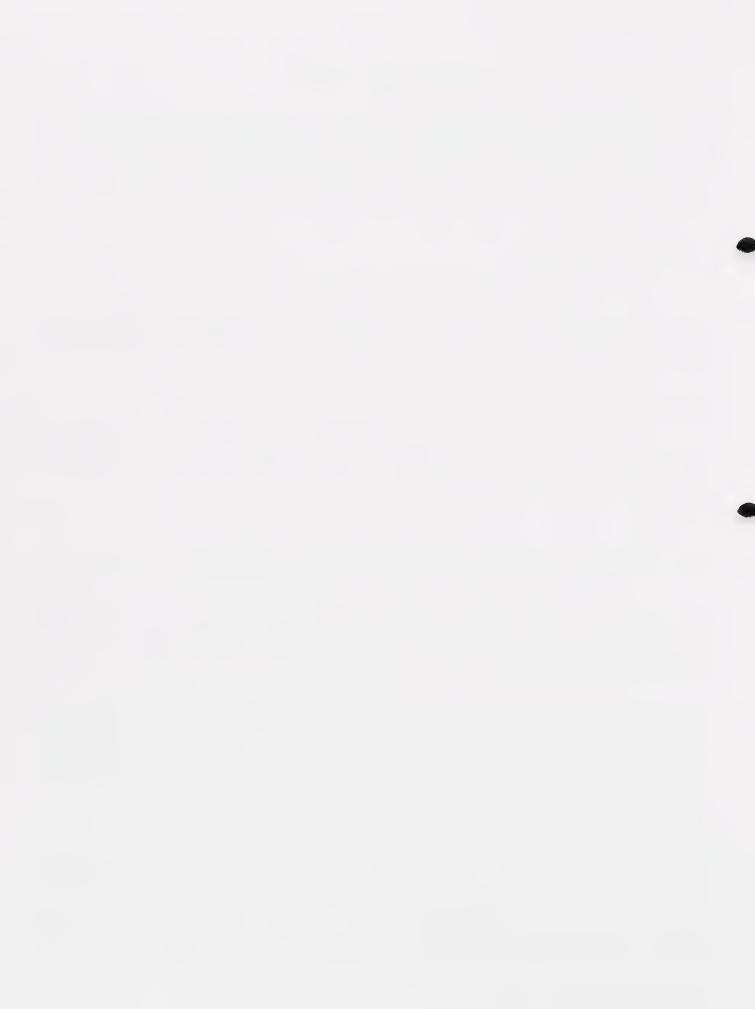
Work Center

ACVP will expand it's Work Center program to accommodate the clients referred to the Work Center. ACVP is currently looking for a new larger facility that will accommodate this expanded program.

Clients referred to the Work Center will work on sub-contract projects obtained from the business community and light manufacturing endeavors. These work projects will vary in nature. Normally they would include product assembly, packaging, collating, blister packaging, and the manufacture of products which ACVP will produce for sale.

The primary rehabilitation goal for clients in the Work Center is to learn "basic work skills". Basic work skills are those skills which a person needs in order to perform in the role of a worker. Clients will receive training in attendance, attention to task, following directions, quality control, co-worker relationships, dealing with authority figures, grooming, personal hygiene, safety at work, communication in the work place, and general productivity.

Community Based Work Projects

In addition to the "facility based" work projects in the Work Center we plan to develop numerous "community based" work projects in real work settings. ACVP's marketing staff will search the community for opportunities to develop group work projects for our GA clients. Potential employers will be enticed to participate in our project by the fact that the "crew leader" who supervises the group of workers will be paid for by our special work project at no cost to the employers. The employer will pick up the cost of the

worker's wages.

Transitional Employment Program (TEP)

Some clients are fearful of the transition from public assistance to self sufficiency. This lack of confidence is a barrier to successful job placement and frequently causes clients to sabotage job interviews and other attempts to transition them off of public assistance.

The TEP program will create temporary part time jobs in real work settings for a period of three months. Clients will typically work 20 hours per week at minimum wage. These jobs will be created in non-profit agencies and in businesses throughout the community.

The job each client is placed in will be specially matched to the individual client's vocational interest and career goal.

It is expected that a three month successful experience in a job which matches each participant's particular career interest will create a higher level of confidence and self-esteem in each client. Hopefully, this higher level of confidence will serve as a motivator towards moving the client into permanent employment.

External Situational Assessment

A certain percentage of GA clients have such limited exposure work that they don't have enough knowledge and information about the world of work to be able to make choices about occupational goals.

The purpose of ESA is to provide a brief variety of work experiences over a ten day to two week period. These experiences usually take the form of working one or two days at three of four different work sites. Additionally, two or three days of "pure observation at several work sites can also be scheduled.

Clients are usually paid for the hours they work and are not paid for the observation periods.
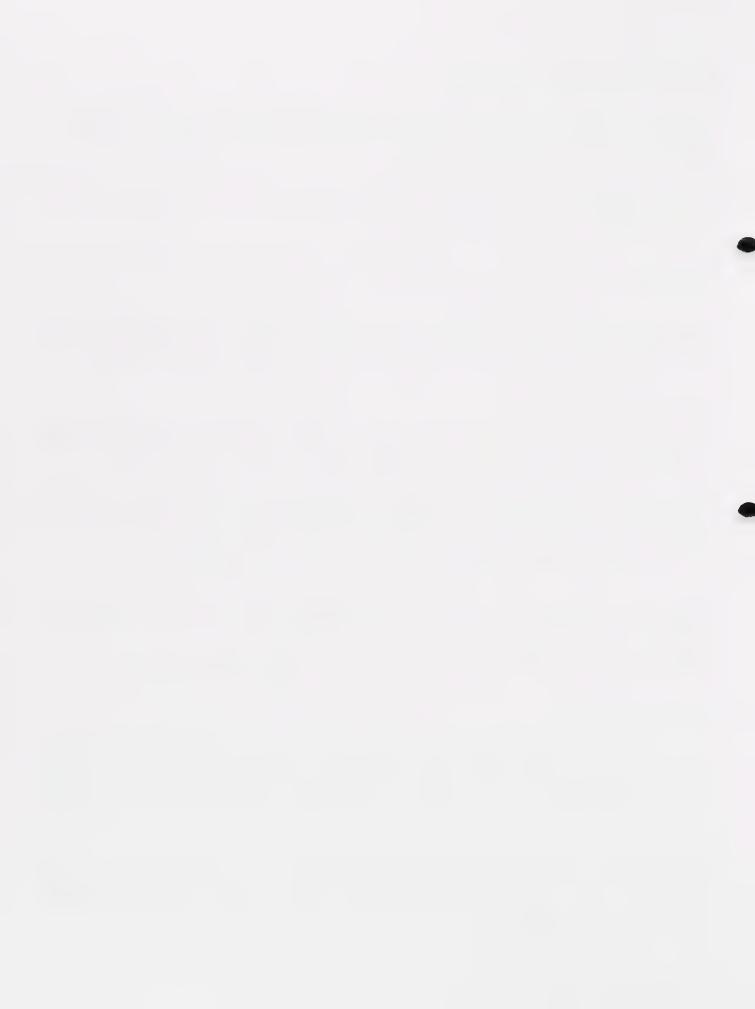
Participation in an ESA gives clients an opportunity to experience "real work sites". This experience is generally very helpful in assisting the client choose an occupational goal.

This experience is, also, a good motivator for clients to become interested in joining a work force.

Pre-vocational Services

Pre-vocational services are basically small group classes which prepare clients for moving into pre-employment services. These classes are aimed at that segment of the GA population which are not ready to begin pre-employment services. This segment of the population is not ready for pre-employment because their knowledge/experience of the world of work is so limited that they are not yet able to do career planning.

The pre-vocational classes will address very basic vocational issues such as: why work?, how to figure out what kind of work you might want to do?, what does it mean to be a worker?, what are the important elements of being a good worker?, how do you learn what skills are required for different occupations?, what skill training is available?, etc.

Pre-Employment Services

Pre-Employment Services are basically small group classes which prepare clients for moving into Job Club. Clients will be given a lot of information about the world of work. They will learn to establish an occupational goal and will prepare the resume which will be used later in job search. Clients will receive training in job interviewing techniques, personal appearance, transportation, and job networking.

Job Club

Job Club is essentially a process of doing "job search" as a member of a group, rather than doing it alone.

ACVP and Social Services will operate Job Clubs which will teach clients how to do job search. These Job Clubs will be staffed with professional Job Development Specialists who will assist clients in their job seeking efforts.

Supported Employment

Supported Employment is a program which provides on-going supports to individuals after job placement. At the time of job placement a Job Coach goes to work with the worker. This Job Coach fills three roles: 1. On-the-job Skill Trainer for the worker; 2. Counselor for the worker; and 3. Consultant for the employer. The Job Coach typically works 100% of the time with the new worker for the first two weeks. After two weeks the Job Coach gradually reduces his/her involvement as the worker is able to grasp the job and function independently. The Job Coach eventually fades to maintaining just two contacts per month for as long as the worker remains in that job.
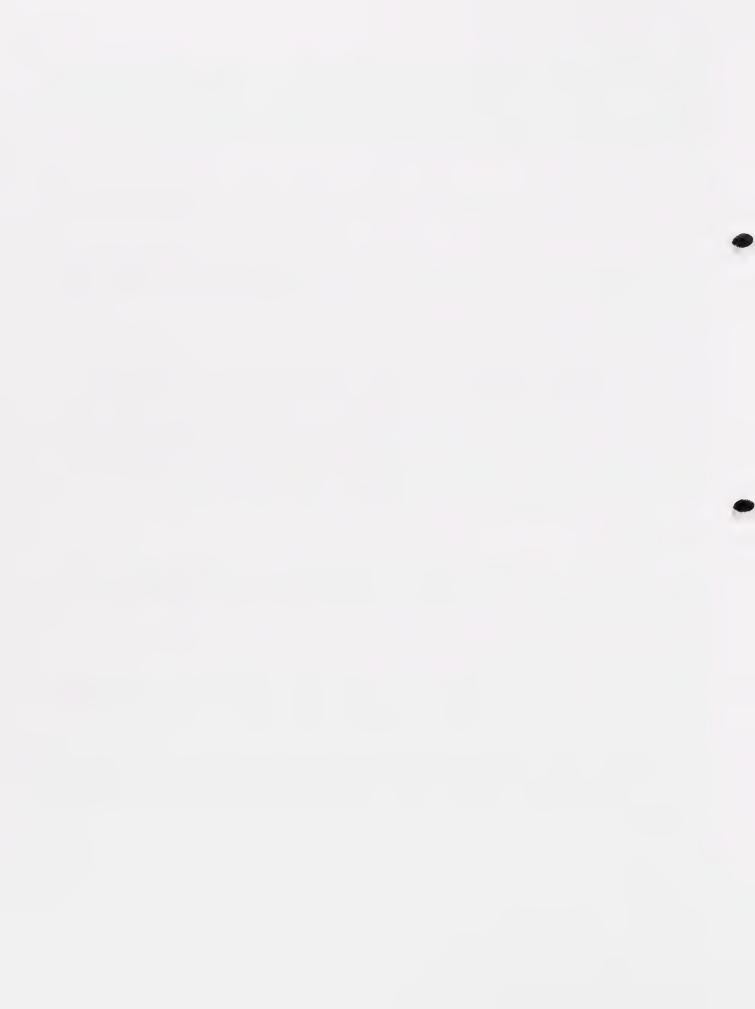
Job Placement

Skilled Job Developers will search the community to identify job opportunities for participants in the special work project. Job Developers will meet individually with GA clients to specifically plan for an appropriate job placement.

Career Advancement Counseling

It is assumed that many of the GA clients who end up working in the various work projects will not be satisfied to remain working at a low wage/entry level type of job. This type of job dissatisfaction is normal. It is natural for an individual to want to move on to a better job.

Our Vocational Counselors will provide career advancement counseling in order to assist individuals move out of the work projects and into jobs in the competitive labor market. As clients move out of Work Project jobs and into the competitive labor market, Work Project slots will open up for new GA participants.

CLIENT CREDIT UNION

Develop a credit union which provides reasonably priced services to welfare recipients. This credit union would bring together people who have a common bond and who would have access to their own financial institution.

Benefits. Organizing a credit union for welfare recipients will have many benefits to the constituency and community which go beyond financial transactions. The formation of the credit union would include the participation of current recipients. There are many skilled and semiskilled jobs which will be created; voluntary positions will be made available leading to paid jobs as the credit union grows.

Values. Inherent in the values of forming a credit Union is the motivation of service: service to individuals and to the broader community. A credit union promotes self-help, expanding social and economic opportunity, and empowering people.
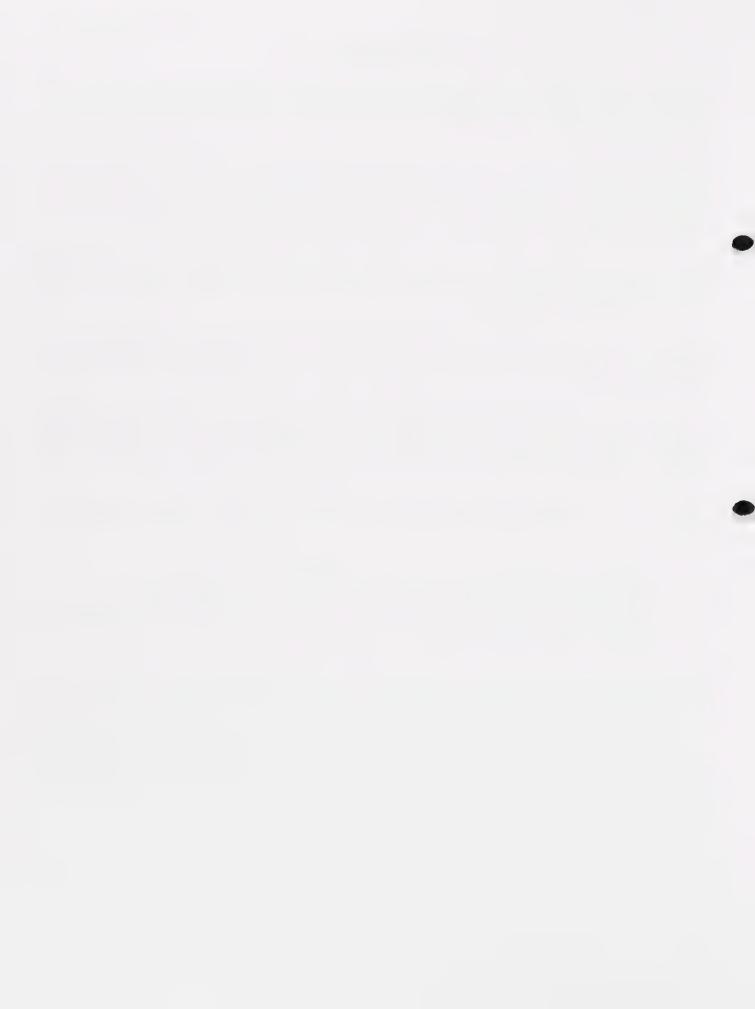
Start-up. The credit union would begin its life with support from sponsors, foundations, and corporations. Credit unions are cooperatives; the credit union would be run by teams of paid and volunteer staff under a Board of Directors.

The National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions provides extensive technical assistance to groups interested in forming credit unions, helping them navigate the process of chartering a credit union under the NCUA. The charter is granted to a group or combination of groups desiring credit. The guidelines are deceptively simple:

"NCUA may grant a charter to any group or combination of groups desiring credit union service where it finds:

o *the group or groups possess an appropriate common bond;*
o *the subscribers are of good character and are fit to represent the group; and*
o *establishment of the credit union is economically advisable - i.e., it will be a viable institution and its chartering will not materially affect the interests of other credit unions or the credit union system.*

There are no explicit requirements for start-up capital investments by the founders, no detailed regulations or guidelines concerning the professional background of the proposed Board of Directors or manager of the credit union. Rather, the greatest demands in the chartering process are two-fold: the need for documentation, especially of the nature of the common bond and of the extent of support for the organizing effort; and the requirement of a business plan which will address the whole range of issues implied by 'economic advisability', such as quality of management, nature of services, budget, lending policies and much more."

Action steps. The steps which will be needed to make a credit union real are listed below:

I. Assess the need
II. Assess the resources
III. Make a choice: *Link with existing institution? Or, Form new institution? (Credit union or other institution?)*
IV. Form a Steering Committee

V. **PHASE I: Early research, first decisions**
    A. Identify sponsors
    B. Develop organizing budget
    C. Identify and secure technical assistance
    D. Seek funds (if necessary)
    E. Begin education of Steering Committee
    F. Make preliminary decisions:
        1. Field of membership
        2. Service strategy
    G. Make initial contact with regulators
        1. Seek preliminary field of membership (FOM) ruling
        2. (Optional) Seek preliminary low-income designation
    H. Prepare introductory brochure
    I. Prepare pledge/survey form

VI. **PHASE II: Collect pledges, seek resources**

Track I- The Pledge Drive
A. - Plan outreach strategy
1. Train speaker's bureau
2. Target key groups
3. Set contact dates and goals
4. Set town meetings
5. Plan publicity
B. - Implement strategy
1. Conduct meetings
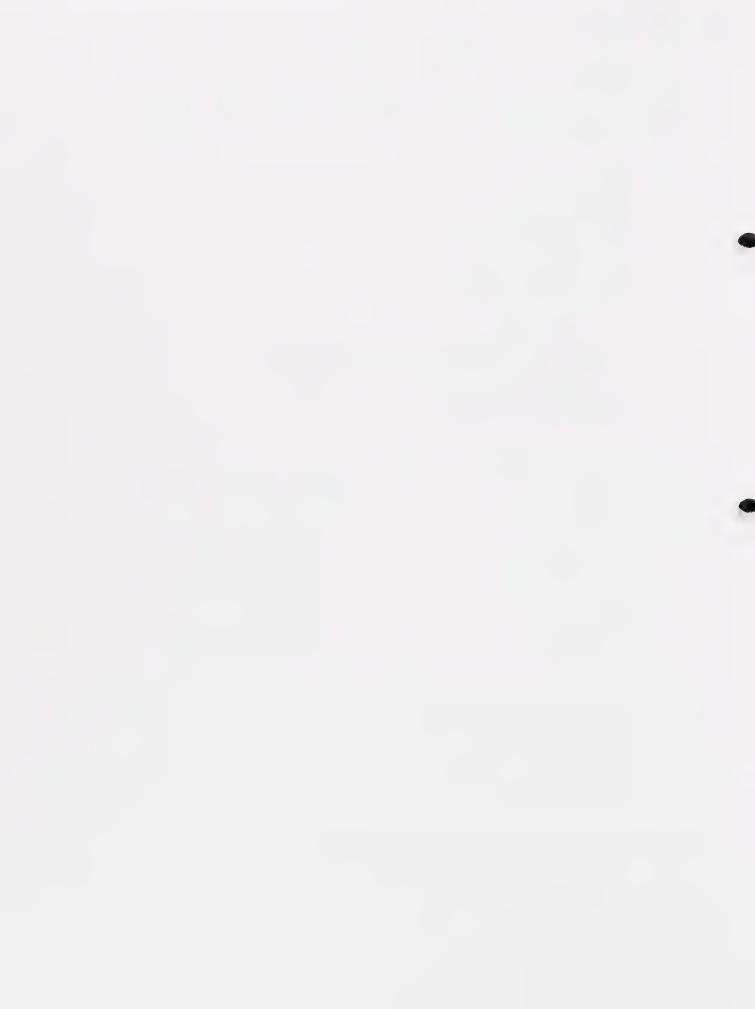2. Collect pledges

Track II.- Resource Development
B. - Identify local and community resources
1. Sponsoring organizations
2. Volunteer and in-kind resources
3. Identify potential funders
4. Prepare presentations and proposals
5. Make initial contacts
6. Follow-up as necessary

VII. **PHASE III: Preparing the application**
    A. Compile and analyze pledges
    B. Prepare the business plan
    C. Recruit, screen and identify officials
    D. Secure resource commitments
    E. Contact regulators

VIII. **PHASE IV: Completing the application process**
    A. Fill out and submit charter forms end supplementary information
    B. Meet with regulator, review response
    C. Make revisions as necessary
    D. Plan grand opening!

Proposal for Military Base Re-Use

Central Concept

Convert a part of the Oakland Army Base into a county-wide job training program that is part of a single welfare system that integrates various discrete, categorical programs and concentrates efforts to promote client self-sufficiency in an intensive "campus" experience.

Key Elements

County or Regional job training program. The core element of this proposal is the conversion of major portions of the Oakland Army Base into an intensive, focussed job training program that includes client access to housing and services. The job training program would be part of an integrated, single welfare system (or if this cannot occur, the program would still be part of a collaborative employment system) that utilizes research findings on "what works" in improving client outcomes. The program must be aggressive and intensive to coincide with proposed federal mandates for welfare-to-work initiatives. This comprehensive program would integrate AFDC and GA recipients and displaced workers into a program that stresses results; single intake, assessment and case management; and shared training resources.
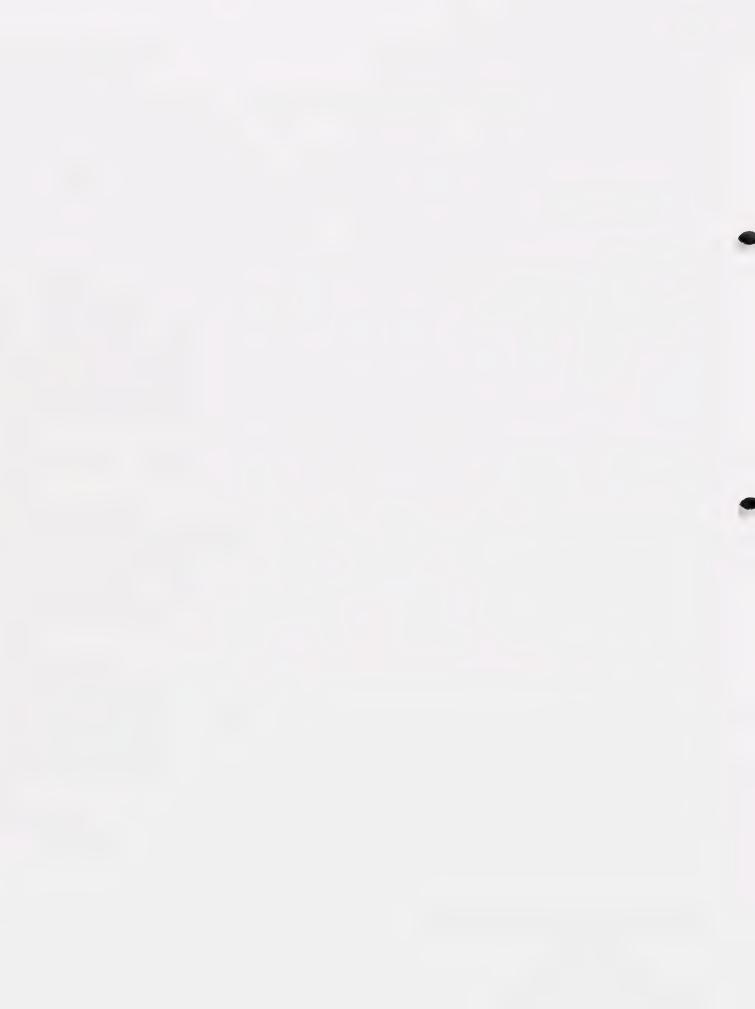
Single welfare system. Job training outcomes would improve in a system that regards the recipient as a whole, and not as a category where needs are handled discretely by categorical programs.

Build partnerships at Federal, State and Local levels. A single welfare system that is collaborative and emphasizes shared responsibility for client outcomes is truly a partnership among all levels of Government. This partnership acknowledges that county welfare departments cannot solve or address poverty alone. Although the State and Federal governments are loath to assume <u>any</u> responsibility for the General Assistance (GA) population, this proposal would foster a greater degree of collaboration, and move toward recognition that GA cannot solely be a local responsibility. The County will include community and faith-based organizations as partners in developing a comprehensive service delivery system.

Campus experience with intensive training and service opportunities. The job training facilities include on-site housing and services that would provide recipients with a real campus experience that is intensive, effective, and focussed on positive outcomes. Clients will be regarded as <u>students</u> whose primary objective is to acquire job skills in an aggressive learning program. Students will have the option of living on campus (vis-a-vis barracks, married student housing, etc.) where they can walk to classes or services. Each student will be assigned a case manager who will help create a learning or training plan with milestones toward self-sufficiency.

Multi-service centers. The campus program will feature on-site services such as intake and assessment, case management, primary medical care, alcohol and drug services, mental health, pastoral counseling, social services, education (e.g., literacy skills), and food.

On-site child care. Volunteer and paid child care workers will operate under the guidance and supervision of licensed child care professionals. Students can also assume limited responsibility as trained

peer child care workers to supplement the available pool. Every student should have access to quality child care, if needed.

Housing. The program must have affordable housing available as an option for the students. Housing could include barracks for single adults and separate units for families or married couples. The total housing capacity will initially be limited by availability or formal authorization by the Department of Defense, but students in the appropriate vocational programs can build additional housing units. The housing program will be set up as a cooperative, where residents assume total responsibility for upkeep, maintenance, gardening, etc. Clients who are properly screened and trained can provide housing security (with oversight by professional public protection supervisors). If this does not work out, the County can contract with a private firm (to be phased out once clients are properly trained). Residents who have a means of paying rent will be charged, with revenues reinvested for client services or benefits. Clients without stable housing who are eligible for the job training program can live on campus. The housing portion of their grants can be used to subsidize their stay.

Reinvestment of housing revenues. The program will realize revenues from housing clients with Section 8 vouchers, other forms of rent subsidies or vouchers (e.g., GA housing or homeless vouchers), public assistance benefits, or part-time work. Revenues can be reinvested in the program to subsidize services or benefits (e.g., to purchase health care benefits, child care, clothing allowances, or transportation; to subsidize the construction of additional housing, etc.) and/or into a Credit Union for recipients to use for emergency loans, routine banking, or check cashing and money management. The basic idea, however, is to use housing revenues to help stabilize and assist clients to remain healthy and productive.

Build sense of community among recipients. Clients who participate in the program will be exposed to the principle that caring and the psychological sense of community is vital to the positive futures of poor communities. This principle will guide every service approach and is a major part of the housing program. The housing component will feature shared responsibility for maintaining an environment free of drugs , alcohol, crime, vandalism, graffiti or litter. Clients will not live in a ghetto-like environment and jeopardize public support for base housing. Problems between clients will be handled through peer conflict mediation and resolution. Clients leaving or graduating will bring the sense of caring back into their respective communities or neighborhoods and foster the belief that working together is a powerful force in overcoming feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

Community organizing and promotion of client commitment to positive change. One of the most profound barriers to client self-sufficiency, positive self-esteem, or community development are feelings of hopelessness and helplessness that accompany persistent poverty. The program will train clients in community organizing and advocacy skills, with the intent of empowering clients and their communities to move toward positive change. Graduates of the program will bring those skills and perspectives into their respective communities or neighborhoods to work with established leaders to promote and sustain positive change. Not every client would want, or have the aptitude, to function as "change agents," but the County would help support community empowerment efforts.

Community economic development. The base can be a vital part of a larger strategy to promote community economic development. This strategy can include the development of micro-enterprises that employ the poor or train them in setting up similar ventures in community. The base program will set up real-life enterprises that create jobs and training opportunities, and instructs clients in small business

operations. They will also learn the importance of creating communities that sustain local businesses through crime prevention, community cleanup and maintenance, and job creation and retention.

Transportation to and from military base. Clients not housed on campus need affordable transportation through subsidized public transit. Depending on the location of the job training center(s) and campus services and housing, the program can arrange for periodic transportation from major public transit drop off points.

Shared responsibility for outcomes. In order for this program to succeed, there needs to be shared responsibility for outcomes. Clients and service providers alike must assume responsibility for program results. To help monitor effectiveness and client satisfaction, the program will include periodic evaluations and longitudinal impact studies. There will be evaluations of the collaborative approach to identify what works and what doesn't work in a single welfare system or regionalized job-training program sited at the military base.